

**Opening Statement**  
**Rep. Bob Inglis (R-SC), Ranking Member**  
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment  
Hearing

*Continued Oversight of NOAA's Geostationary Weather Satellite System*

April 23, 2009

Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Baird, for holding this hearing about the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites-R series (GOES-R). This hearing continues close oversight of this vital weather satellite program, oversight that started under Republican leadership of this Committee.

Exactly one year and a half ago, to the day, this subcommittee held a hearing on the GOES-R program. In that hearing, GAO informed us that the program was over budget, behind on schedule, and running a risk of discontinuity in valuable forecasting data. GAO also made recommendations on how to proceed so as to avoid any further cost overruns while ensuring that technological development stays on schedule.

Now we're here, with a GAO report in hand entitled, "Acquisition Has Increased Costs, Reduced Capabilities, and Delayed Schedules." The price tag is up \$670 million since we last met, even though the program has now been downsized from eighty one products on the satellites to thirty-two. There is still a threat of launch delays, and even if we still get two new satellites in the air, we're now not sure if there will be an in orbit backup. That means that one mishap with the new instruments, and we could lose our forecasting eyes on half the world.

So the question before us today is: What are we going to do to fix this problem? We obviously can't go back, but we can't afford to show up a year and a half from now only to find that the future of our weather forecasting is even more off track. Is this a matter of poor management? Should NOAA continue to be charged with supervision over this program, or does Congress need to give the reins to another agency entirely? And how are we prioritizing the instruments we put on the satellite to make sure we get the necessary equipment in place so that we don't experience any discontinuity in valuable forecasting data?

Those of us responsible for this program, Congress, NOAA, and NASA, cannot lightly risk delays and cost overruns. GOES-R today is a \$7.7 billion program for two satellites. That is a lot of taxpayer money. We expect that investment to provide a series of weather satellites that are launched on time and provide data to ensure the most accurate possible weather forecasting and modeling.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and yield back the balance of my time.